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⇒ paraphrased due
to informality
of mtg.

**DISABLED TASK FORCE
NEW HQ BUILDING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1992**

Thank you, _____.

**It is with great pride that I
welcome the National Task Force
on Disabled Persons to your
meeting here at the new NASA
headquarters building.**

**Since I took the job of NASA
Administrator five months ago, I
have spoken out across the country
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No where is this issue more pressing than in our need to recruit more disabled people and ^{involve them in} ~~their special~~ ^{the full spectrum of NASA programs} skills to participate in the exploration of space.

In fact, this new building, which is only about half occupied at the moment, is in many ways a symbol of where NASA is now, and where we need to go in the months and years ahead.

Although designed two years before the Americans with Disabilities Act went into effect, the building has many common sense features designed to ease access for everyone. The elevators beep in distinctive ways, depending on whether one is traveling up or down. Signs within the building are painted in highly contrasting colors, with raised letters and Braille markings to help those with impaired vision. Our new office furniture can be adjusted to fit nearly everyone, from the very tall to those who use wheelchairs.

Yet I was instantly unhappy to discover that none of the entrances feature automatic doors. And later I found that we need to reserve more parking spaces for the flow of disabled visitors that I expect to see here soon. Both of these issues are being addressed as I speak.

And the sooner, the better, because I have challenged all NASA employees to look inward and develop at least five ways to measure and improve their performance, and distractions such as impassable doors won't be tolerated.

The reason such annoyances can't be tolerated is because of people like Jill Noble, a NASA worker I encountered during a late April visit to Lewis Research Center in Cleveland. She wrote me a wonderful letter in early August reporting back the five things she has decided to pursue in her personal quest to become more effective.

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She sought out a volunteer reader to help her review mail that her speech synthesizer can't handle. Best of all, she has put forth extra effort to research new technology that could help her and other disabled people upgrade the capabilities of their computer systems.

**I salute Jill for accepting the challenge of self improvement. It helps inspire me to work that much harder to measure and improve myself. **

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Yet this number is not nearly large enough. Several of our field centers, such as Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, have developed promising long-term strategies for attracting more disabled people into the NASA workforce.

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**And later this morning, you will hear about an exciting new user-friendly computer office at NASA outfitted with voice synthesizers and page readers specially for disabled workers. **

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These improvements include lightweight, collapsible wheelchairs, computer-aided glasses for the visually impaired, and a controller for a minivan based on technology used on the lunar rovers that transported Apollo astronauts across the surface of the moon.

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Picture a moonbase, where astronauts have lived for several weeks as part of an international crew setting up a massive interferometer to produce images of other star systems. One of these images might contain the first conclusive evidence that Earth-like planets exist in another solar system.

But to make such discoveries, the farflung components of the interferometer must be arranged with great precision. So one of the astronauts is testing a special robotic manipulator developed by a disabled NASA engineer on Earth, based on the engineer's experience moving electronic components around his laboratory. This manipulator that enables the astronaut to align the components of the interferometer in a third of the time it takes her cohorts. Soon, they are clamoring to share the unit.

The installation of the interferometer is completed ahead of schedule, clearing time for geologic expeditions that return with extra samples of lunar soil.

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When he signed the Americans with Disabilities Act, President Bush said, "In our America, the most generous, optimistic nation on the face of the Earth, we must not and will not rest until every man and woman with a dream \ has the means to achieve it."

NASA is the agency of dreams, but it's also the place we get to work on making dreams into realities. Going back to the Moon and exploring Mars and the rest of the solar system \ is an enormous challenge.

**To do it, we will need the best minds in the country, and that includes everyone. I hope you'll join with NASA, as together, we reach for the stars. **

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Draft 2

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Dragon comments

9/10/92
Draft 1

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Building and operating a space station, launching a heavy-lift rocket booster, sending crews to live on the moon and survey Mars -- these are not the exclusive duties of any citizen. They belong to all of us, and it will take the physical and mental skills of every ~~type~~ of person out there to get the job done.\\\

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Livingstone

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